

# City gives final OK for shopping center

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WATSONVILLE — A month after giving "conceptual approval" to the 272,000-square-foot Overlook shopping center, the City Council gave final approval last night.

The Overlook matter took 15 minutes, 8 hours and 45 minutes less than the public hearing of Feb. 13.

This time there was no long line of speakers pro and con, just resolution of a few financial issues with developer Don Orosco, who will build the center on Main Street, just north of Ramsay Park.

The council had held up approval last month over what Orosco should contribute to the city's affordable-housing fund. The city staff recommended waiving the \$138,000 fee for Overlook. The council said there should be some, and told the staff to negotiate with Orsoco.

The council last night approved this alternative, recommended by the staff:

- \$25,000 for affordable housing.
- \$25,000 to the El Pajaro Community Development Corporation's

program for creating jobs and new business.

- \$10,000 as a two-to-one challenge grant that will eventually provide \$30,000 in scholarships.

- \$50,000, payable when the first permits for the project are issued, for job training programs.

Orosco had previously offered 1,000 square feet of space at the center for job-training programs. The city asked for the money instead, because the space wouldn't be available immediately.

Orosco said he was glad to "jump start" the scholarship program, saying he wouldn't have been able to go to college without one.

Construction should begin early this summer, with completion next spring, Orosco said.

Scheduled for the center are a 96,000-square-foot Target store, a 50,000-square-foot Safeway, a Longs Drugs and a Staples office supply.

Safeway and Longs could be bumped from the lineup if the city can come up with alternative tenants that sell "comparison goods" — the kind people shop around for.

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As part of the development approval, Orosco agreed to work with the city for 90 days to find major comparison-goods tenants.

Orosco said last night he will give the "old college try," adding that he had already searched for such tenants, but couldn't find any willing to come into Overlook.

Dennis Osmer cast the only vote against the center. He had expressed concern last month that the new stores could force existing ones out of business.

Councilman Tony Campos, a real-estate agent who owns property nearby, abstained.